

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated DNA fragment having ~~at least one nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of the nucleotide sequence~~[[s]] set forth as SEQ ID NO: 35, ~~SEQ ID NO: 36 and SEQ ID NO: 37.~~
2. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated plasmid or ~~[[a]]~~ an isolated partial DNA fragment thereof, characterized by comprising a DNA replication region having ~~at least one nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of the nucleotide sequence~~[[s]] set forth as SEQ ID NO: 35, ~~SEQ ID NO: 36 and SEQ ID NO: 37.~~
- 3.-4. (Cancelled).
5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated plasmid or ~~[[a]]~~ an isolated partial DNA fragment thereof, characterized by comprising a coding region for a DNA replication-related protein ~~having at least one nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of the nucleotide sequences set forth as SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 14, SEQ ID NO: 17 and SEQ ID NO: 22 and comprising a DNA replication region having at least one nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of the nucleotide sequence~~[[s]] set forth as SEQ ID NO: 35, ~~SEQ ID NO: 36 and SEQ ID NO: 37.~~
6. – 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated plasmid or ~~[[a]]~~ an isolated partial DNA fragment thereof, characterized by comprising a coding region for a DNA replication-related protein ~~having at least one nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of the nucleotide sequences set forth as SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 14, SEQ ID NO: 17 and SEQ ID NO: 22, comprising a DNA replication region having at least one nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of the nucleotide sequence~~[[s]] set forth as SEQ ID NO: 35; SEQ ID NO: 36 and SEQ ID NO: 37, and comprising a promoter region having the nucleotide sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO: 76.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated circular plasmid characterized by comprising ~~[[a]]~~ the ~~plasmid or a partial DNA fragment according to claim 1, 3, or 6, wherein the numbers of and one or more~~ restriction endonuclease cleavage sites selected from the group consisting of are *Bam*H I~~[[[: 2]]~~, *Eco*R I~~[[[: 2]]~~, *Kpn* I~~[[[: 1]]~~, *Pvu* II~~[[[: 1]]~~, *Sac* I~~[[[: 1]]~~ and *Sma* I~~[[[: 1]]~~, and wherein the size of the isolated circular plasmid is approximately 5.4 kbp.

10. – 26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated shuttle vector replicable in bacteria belonging to the genus *Rhodococcus* and *E. coli*, and comprising a ~~plasmid or partial~~ the DNA fragment thereof according to claim 1 ~~or 12~~ and a DNA region replicable in *E. coli*.

28. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ An isolated vector characterized by being constructed using ~~[[a]]~~ the shuttle vector according to claim 27.

29. – 38. (Cancelled).